



# NEWSLETTER

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY**



## NEH CHAIRMAN VISITS WESTERN SOUTH DAKOTA

Jon Parrish Peede, Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, visited Western South Dakota this week.

His visits included humanities programs supported by the NEH and carried out by the South Dakota Humanities Council. One of the many visits included the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home to discuss the "Arts and Military Initiative." Lt. Governor Matt Michels was able to participate in this visit and discuss this initiative.

"The visit from Chairman Peede of the National Endowment for the Humanities is a tremendous honor for our state and especially for our veterans," said Lt. Gov. Michels. "Chairman Peede has a long history of integrating the stories of war and our veterans with how we as citizens should recognize these gifts of liberty provided by our heroes. His support of our arts/humanities initiative at the Veterans Home will be a model for other states."

South Dakota Humanities Council (SDHC) is the only cultural organization in the state whose sole mission is to deliver humanities programming to the people of South Dakota. With support from the NEH, organizations and individuals from throughout the state, the Brookings-based organization "celebrates literature, promotes civil conversation, and tells the stories that define the people of South Dakota."

For more information on the South Dakota Humanities Council, visit [www.sdhumanities.org](http://www.sdhumanities.org). For more on NEH, visit [www.neh.gov](http://www.neh.gov)

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**STANDING TOGETHER**  
THE HUMANITIES AND THE EXPERIENCE OF WAR

*An Endowment-wide initiative to promote understanding of the military experience and to support returning veterans. NEH seeks grant proposals that explore war and its aftermath, promote discussion of the experience of military service, and support returning veterans and their families.*

# VETEXT SYSTEM

## TRANSFORMING VA'S MEDICAL SCHEDULING PROCESS

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently launched VEText, a text messaging appointment-reminder system, which to date has helped the VA reduce no-show medical visits by more than 100,000. The VA introduced VEText in March and 138 VA facilities, including the VA Black Hills Health Care System and the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, are currently using the automated interactive text-message system, which reminds veterans of upcoming health-care appointments, allowing them easily to confirm or cancel the event.

"Every missed appointment represents a lost opportunity to provide faster access to care for a veteran in need," said VA's Acting Secretary Peter O'Rourke. "VEText underscores the VA's commitment to digital modernization and represents a milestone in putting more user-friendly capabilities in the hands of veterans and our employees."

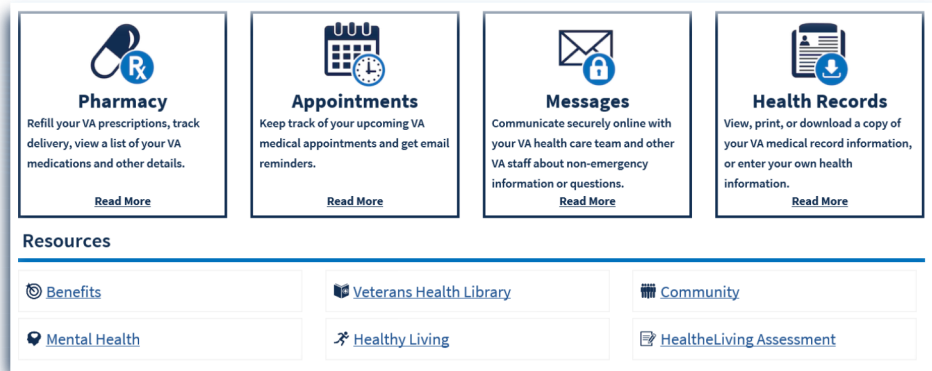
According to the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Office of Veterans Access to Care, as of July 9, more than 3.24 million patients have received VEText messages and canceled 319,504 appointments, freeing up time slots for other veterans to use.

Veterans who have previously used the VA health-care system — with a cell phone number listed in their electronic health records — are automatically enrolled in VEText. Veterans can update their phone numbers during the check-in or check-out process for an appointment, at any kiosk or if they have a My HealtheVet Premium account at <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home>.

VEText is integrated with the VA's electronic health-records system and does not require manual action by VA staff. Appointments are automatically scheduled and canceled via text message, freeing staff to provide more personalized care to veterans.

"VEText has changed the way we communicate with our veteran patients," said John Ulliyot, VA Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs. "Veterans appreciate the convenient, user-friendly system and understand this technology not only helps them, but their fellow veterans as well."

For more information about VEText, visit: <https://www.va.gov/HEALTH/VEText.asp>.





**SEPTEMBER 1, 2018**  
**NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY**  
**300 5th ST. S., BROOKINGS, SD**

## REGISTRATION

**\$20 PER PERSON**  
**BEGINS AT 10AM**  
**PARADE DEPARTS AT HIGH NOON**  
**DOWN BROOKINGS MAIN AVENUE**

**\$500 BEST HAND**  
**PLUS OTHER GREAT PRIZES**

**RAIN OR SHINE**  
**ALL VEHICLES WELCOME**

**PROCEEDS**  
**BENEFIT DAV HOSPITAL**  
**TRANSPORTATION FUND**

## QUESTIONS

**CSM (RETIRED) ROBERT FOSTER**  
**(605) 690-1961**

**MSG ERIC KINSLOW**  
**(605) 415-1759**

**facebook.com/727DAVPokerRun**

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# VA AND IBM WATSON HEALTH EXTEND PARTNERSHIP

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and IBM Watson Health announced the extension of a public-private partnership to apply artificial intelligence (AI) to help interpret cancer data in the treatment of veteran patients.

First announced two years ago as part of the [National Cancer Moonshot Initiative](#), the VA oncologists have now used IBM Watson for Genomics technology to support precision oncology care for more than 2,700 veterans with cancer.

Precision oncology is the practice of biologically directed cancer care. For example, the mutations in a cancer's genome (the cancer's DNA) can significantly impact the treatment options available to treat that cancer and the likely outcomes after treatment. By knowing the cancer genome, oncologists and patients are able to choose therapies that specifically target the patient's cancer.

The VA's precision oncology program primarily supports stage 4 cancer patients who have exhausted other treatment options. The partnership extension with IBM will enable VA oncologists to continue using Watson for Genomics through at least June 2019.



“Our mission with VA’s precision oncology program is to bring the most advanced treatment opportunities to veterans, in hopes of giving our nation’s heroes better treatments through these breakthroughs,” said Acting VA Secretary Peter O’Rourke. “We look forward to continuing this strategic partnership to assist the VA in providing the best care for our veterans.”

The VA treats 3.5 percent of the nation’s cancer patients — the largest group of cancer patients within any one health-care group. In order to bring precision oncology advances to this large group of patients, with equal access available anywhere in the country, the VA established a central “hub” in Durham, North Carolina.

In this facility, a small group of oncologists and pathologists receive tumor samples from patients nationwide and sequence the tumor DNA. They then use AI — the ability of a computer program or a machine to think and learn — to help interpret the genomic data, identifying relevant mutations and potential therapeutic options that target those mutations.

(continued on next page)

# VA AND IBM WATSON PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED)

More than one-third of the patients who have benefited from the VA's precision oncology program are veterans from rural areas where it has traditionally been difficult to deliver cutting-edge medical breakthroughs.

"The VA is leading the nation to scale and spread the delivery of high-quality precision oncology care, one veteran at a time," said Dr. Kyu Rhee, chief health officer for IBM Watson Health. "It is incredibly challenging to read, understand and stay up-to-date with the breadth and depth of the medical literature, and link them to relevant mutations for personalized cancer treatments. This is where AI can play an important role in helping to scale precision oncology, as demonstrated in our work with the VA, the largest integrated health system in the U.S."

For more information about the VA's precision oncology program, visit <https://www.research.va.gov/pubs/varqu/spring2016/4.cfm>.

# DOUG BROWN MEMORIAL PHEASANT HUNT



The North Central Paralyzed Veterans of America will host the annual Doug Brown Memorial Hunt on Monday, September 10, 2018, at Top Gun Hunting Ranch, LLC near Howard, SD.

This hunt is for PVA members and associate members.

The PVA North Central Chapter trap shoot will be held September 7-9, 2018, at the Crooks Gun Club.

For more information on both of these events, please contact the PVA North Central Chapter at 605.782.9797.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Jul 21-25—VFW National Convention—Kansas City, MO  
Jul 26—VABHHCS Veterans Town Hall—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre 12:30 pm—2:30 pm (CT)  
Jul 28—Flatlanders Militiamen 6th Annual Poker Run—Shipwreck Bar—Chester—10:00 am—5:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 4—Homecoming for American Legion State Commander Denny Brenden—Ramkota Hotel and Event Center—Watertown (1901 9th Avenue SW) - 12:00—4:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 11—Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebration—Mobridge/Pollock High School Gym—2:00 pm (CT)  
Aug 20-24—SDDVA Benefits School—Ramkota—Pierre  
Aug 24-30—American Legion National Convention—Minneapolis, MN  
Aug 30—Veterans Day at the State Fair  
Sept 1—14th Annual DAV/727th Poker Run—Brookings National Guard Armory (300 5th Street S) - 10:00 am (CT)  
Sept 3—Labor Day (state offices closed)  
Sept 7-9—PVA North Central Chapter Trap Shoot—Crooks Gun Club  
Sept 10—Doug Brown Memorial Pheasant Hunt—Top Gun Hunting Ranch—Howard  
Sept 11—Improving Veterans Care Conference—BHSU (4300 Cheyenne Boulevard) - Rapid City  
Sept 14—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—VFW Post 1273—Rapid City—10:00 am (MT)  
Sept 21—7th Annual POW/MIA Program—Sioux Falls Veterans Memorial Park (1021 W. Bailey Street) 6:30 pm (CT)  
Sept 21—Veterans Stand Down—VFW (3601 S. Minnesota Avenue) - Sioux Falls—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)  
Oct 10—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—Soldiers and Sailors Building—Pierre—8:00 am (CT)  
Nov 16—VABHHCS VSO Congressional Forum—Domiciliary Auditorium—Hot Springs —10:00 am (MT)



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building - 425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

